

THE COBBLERS

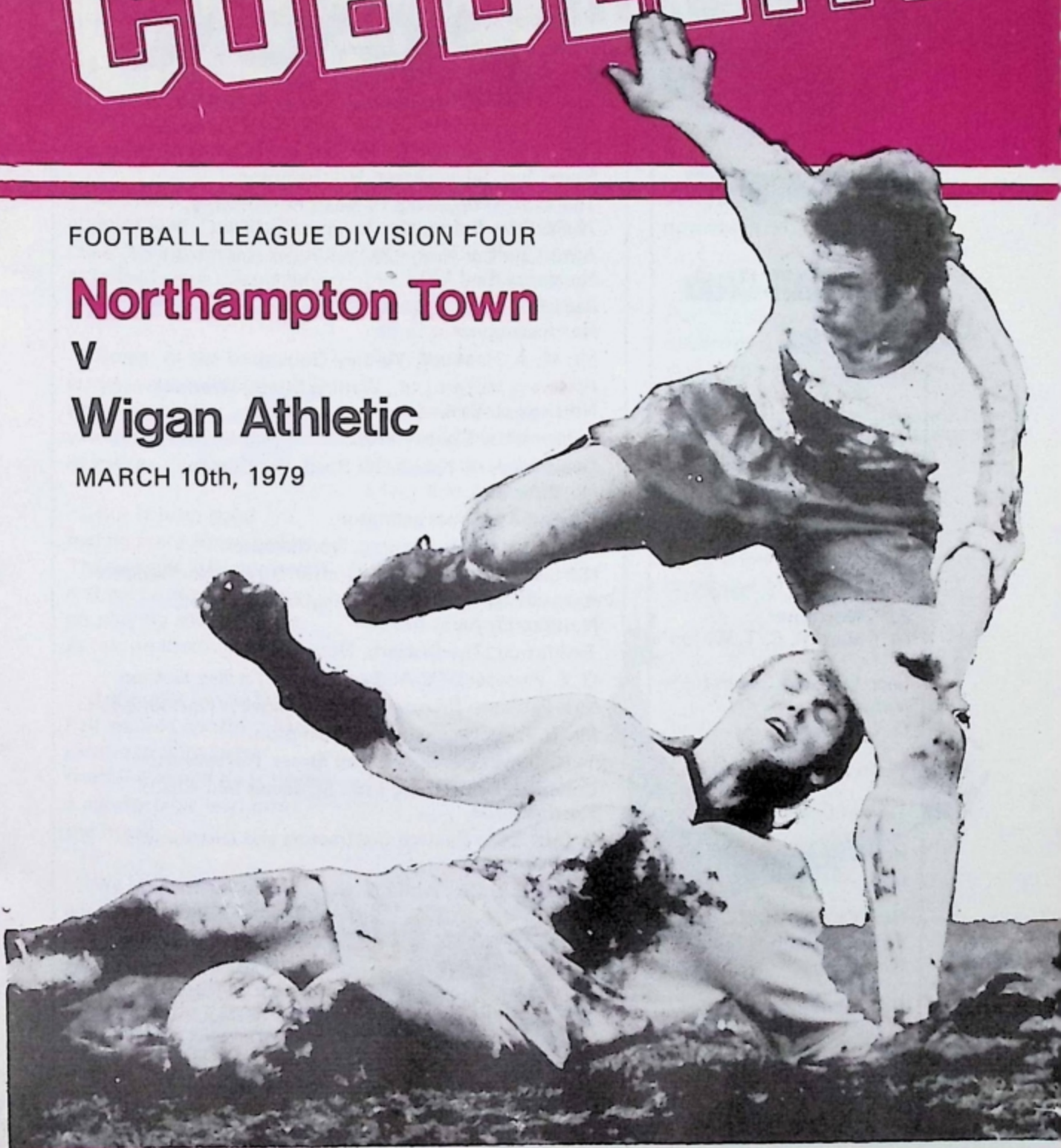
FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION FOUR

Northampton Town

v

Wigan Athletic

MARCH 10th, 1979



1558

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME OF
NORTHAMPTON TOWN F.C.

20p



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Patrons are still being accepted by the Club. Full
details from Dave Bowen, County Ground.



The Mike Keen Column

Supporters were disappointed in Tuesday's result against Huddersfield as indeed were the players and myself.

Some of the basic errors were quite unbelievable — ones that you just would not expect players to make.

But it is no good feeling sorry for ourselves. The remedy is in our hands and we have got to carry on playing and believing in our methods.

I thought in the first half we had control of the game and with better finishing would have taken a comfortable lead into the break.

We badly need the encouragement of a run of good results and I still feel we are more than capable of putting together a run like that.

But there are always bright spots in any situation. At the moment it must be the form of George Reilly, who is playing better than at any time since I have been here.

Alongside him John Froggatt has not come up with the goals lately, but I feel he has been a major factor in George's run of seven goals in eight games.

I think George has developed on the back of John's contribution, a fact that I think is sometimes not appreciated.

It was, of course, disappointing that the crowd was so small. The last

thing we wanted was a downpour of rain.

But I can assure you that the players are not dispirited and are determined to battle their way out of trouble.

I don't think they can be accused of throwing in the towel and with the right sort of encouragement, there is enough character to get out of this mess.



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FRED SPEAKMAN'S

TOWN TALK

After today's game with league newcomers, Wigan, there is another next Tuesday against Port Vale, making three home fixtures in eight days.

Torquay and Rochdale are also due at Northampton this month before the busy finale in April.

York are here on Tuesday April 3, while Bournemouth and Crewe represent the Easter programme on the County Ground, on Easter Monday and Tuesday respectively.

Then come Grimsby, Hereford and Barnsley, which altogether mean 10 home fixtures from today, so the Northampton fans have plenty of football in store.

It is going to be a very hard programme with nine away fixtures as well and there is no doubt that it will be a survival of the fittest.

It has also been a tough time for the Cobblers finances with such a long spell of matches being postponed.

But now comes the time for the position at the

bank to be levelled up. In fact if there is a fine Spring the club may end up better off than if some

The year 1979 has been a very thin one so far for County Ground fans with no home fixtures until last Tuesday's game with Huddersfield.

But there will be an abundance of football here as the leeway of four home postponed games are made up, together with the usual rush of late season fixtures.

It will be two games a week all the time and the cobblers will be fighting hard for the points that will take them out of the lowly regions of the league table.

But now comes the time for the position at the bank to be levelled up. In fact if there is a fine Spring the club may end up better off than if some of the postponed games has been played in Arctic conditions.

One way that rearranged games have gone against the Cobblers is that the first four matches in 1979 were all away and produced but one point.

There was a creditable goalless draw at Bournemouth but the visits to Doncaster, Reading and Stockport all brought defeats and dropped the Cobblers into a lowly position. Let us hope for a spirited revival.



press box

Looking at the league table in this programme makes astonishing reading.

It was hoped that the big freeze would allow the side to forget about the misfortunes at the tail-end of last year and re-start afresh.

But since then the Cobblers were dealt the blow of having to play away games, hardly designed to regain confidence.

The upshot is that after five post-freeze games, the Cobblers have taken just one point and the position is gloomier than ever.

Yet at the start of the season, there were genuine high hopes based on an excellent format pre-season and the results at the latter end of last term.

Trying to analyse what has gone wrong is futile. The burning issue now is to get out of the mess and by that getting out of the re-election zone.

It is humiliating to have to go to the Football League and beg their forgiveness, especially as the club's neighbours Kettering might be the nominated non-league side seeking higher status.

There is, in my opinion, no chance of the club's

status being sacrificed, but finishing in the bottom is still acutely embarrassing.

The bottom four is no place for the Cobblers, for today's visitors Wigan are showing what non-league clubs can do when they gain higher status.

Wigan and Wimbledon could get promotion this season — both elevated in the last two seasons — and that would be a powerful argument to allow another new team in.

I would like to see a blueprint for the future produced to give some indication of where the club wants to go — and how they hope to achieve it.

Since the promotion of 1975/76, the club has been on a downward swing — disappointing to say the least after the lofty aspirations after going into Division Three.

Brian Barron
(Chronicle & Echo)

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Statistics '78-79

• Re-arranged game
† To be arranged

Date	Opponents	Jayes	Geldinits	Mead	Woollett	Robertson	Bryant	Farrington	Williams	Reilly	Liddle	Christie	Froggatt	Walker	Poole	Saunders	Wassell	Cordice	Bowen	Ashenden	McCahey
1978																					
Aug. 12	C'bridge U. LC1 A 2-2	4043	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11				12				
Aug. 16	C'bridge U. LC2 H 2-1	4721	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11				12				
Aug. 19	Torquay U A 1-0	2966	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			5				
Aug. 23	Hartlepool H 1-1	4288	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			5				
Aug. 26	Wimbledon A 1-4	2644	1	3	4	5	10	7	8	9	11	6		2		10			12		
Aug. 30	Hereford, LC2 H 0-0	3991	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11		12							
Sep. 2	Bradford City H 1-0	3320	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11		12			10				
Sep. 6	H'ford LC2 Rep A 1-0	4205	1	4	3	5	6	7	8	9	11		9	2			10				
Sep. 9	York City A 0-1	2358	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	11	9				12				
Sep. 12	Darlington H 4-1	3443	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	10	11	9	3								
Sep. 15	Scunthorpe H 1-0	3859	1	2	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	10	3	1						
Sep. 23	Huddersfield A 0-1	3320	2	12	4	5	6	7	8	10	11	9	3	1							
Sep. 26	Port Vale A 2-2	3245	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	11	9	1					12			
Sep. 30	Doncaster H 3-0	3011	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	11	9	1					12			
Oct. 4	Stoke, LC3 H 1-3	11235	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11		9		1		12	10			
Oct. 7	Barnsley A 1-1	10102	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11		9		1		12	10			
Oct. 14	Reading H 2-2	4694	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	9				12	10			
Oct. 17	Grimby A 3-4	5529	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	9				12	10			
Oct. 21	Stockport H 2-2	3867	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	9				12	10			
Oct. 28	Wigan A 0-2	6264	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	9				12	10			
Nov. 4	Newport H 3-1	3065	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	9	12		4				12	
Nov. 11	Bradford City A 0-3	3361	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	9								
Nov. 18	Wimbledon H 1-1	3623	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	9	12	1						
Nov. 25	Plymouth FAC 1 A 0-2	13338	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	9								

[illegible]

Our Visitors

League soccer returned to Springfield Park this season after an absence of 47 years! The old Wigan Borough club resigned from the Football League in October 1931, because of financial problems, and Wigan Athletic F.C. was formed to take over the ground a few months later. Since then, they had been applying for League status almost without a break until they finally won acceptance this season.

They suffered atrocious luck in the 1950 election when each section of the Third Division was increased by two clubs. First place in the ballot went to Shrewsbury Town who polled 30 votes. Wigan and Workington tied on 19 for the second place, with Scunthorpe fourth on 17.

A second ballot resulted: Wigan 15, Scunthorpe 15, Workington 14. Yet another poll gave Scunthorpe the verdict by 30-18. So Wigan, who had tied in the first two votes, were overlooked in favour of a club not even in the original reckoning!

To rub salt into the wound Workington, who were discarded for that third vote, won their league place a year later.

No wonder Wigan, with such wonderful facilities,

felt hard done by. Their Springfield Park stadium is bigger than very many football league grounds, having a capacity of around 30,000. Ironically, their record crowd was 27,100 to an F.A. Cup tie against another non-League side — Hereford United — in 1953.

Actually, Springfield Park did house an even bigger crowd — 30,611 attended during the life time of the club's predecessor Wigan Borough.

In 1932 Wigan Athletic entered the Cheshire League — they were champions in three successive seasons 1934, 1935 and 1936 — and after the war they switched to the Lancashire Combination. They reverted to the Cheshire League in 1961.

They became founder members of the Northern Premier League in 1968 and won the Championship of that competition in 1971 and 1975.

IAN McNEILL (Wigan's Manager)

Ian McNeill is currently in his second spell as Wigan's manager. He previously left following a dispute but was then invited back when Gordon Milne left for Coventry.

Mr. McNeill was born in Glasgow and started his professional career with Aberdeen. He didn't meet with a great deal of success there so in 1956 he moved south to sign for Leicester City.

At Filbert Street he soon emerged as a high-scoring forward, hitting 18 league goals in his first full season (1956/57) in the team. He was transferred to Brighton in 1959 and served the Sussex club well for more than four years.

Southend signed him in 1962 and he completed his league playing days with them just over a year later.

He went into management in non-league circles, taking charge of Wigan and Ross County, in the Scottish Highlands League.

Wigan's elevation to league status this season has given him the chance to prove himself as a league manager and we need look no farther than the current League Table to discover how quickly he has met success at this level.

The Players

JOHN BROWN (Goal-keeper). John spent several years with Preston N.E. where his senior appearances were limited by the consistency of Allan Kelly to around 100. He went to Stockport on loan and spent half of 1970/71 in their League eleven. In 1975 he returned to Stockport for one season before signing for Wigan, who were then in the Northern Premier League.

KEVIN SMART (Defender). Kevin developed with Plymouth Argyle, making his League debut in 1976/77. Though he won a regular place last season, he was freed at the end of it and moved on to Wigan.

NOEL WARD (Defender) Noel started as a striker with Portadown, the Irish club, but after transferring to Aberdeen in 1974 he made his first appearance for them at centre-back. In 1976 he turned out in goal! Wigan signed him in 1976.

DAVID FRETWELL (Defender). Neil didn't make the League team at Leeds and was transferred to Norwich in 1975. During his first campaign at Carrow Road he was released on loan to Stockport. In 1977 he was transferred to Swansea and this season he was signed by Wigan.

JOE HINNIGAN (Defender). To Joe went the honour of scoring

Wigan's first goal in league soccer, against Newport County last September. He had not played League soccer prior to Wigan's elevation last summer and, before joining Wigan in 1975, he was with South Liverpool.

TOMMY GORE (Midfield) Tommy thought his chances of making it in League soccer had disappeared when Transmere released him in 1974 without giving him a first-team chance. He went to Wigan and happily played through their last four seasons of Northern Premier League football.

FRANK CORRIGAN (Midfield). Frank joined Blackpool from Ormskirk in 1972 at the age of 19 but didn't manage to get into their League team. He moved on to Walsall in 1973 but didn't do a lot with them, either. He went back into non-league football with Northwich Victoria in 1977 and joined Wigan last season.

JEFF WRIGHT (Midfield). Jeff is enjoying his first taste of League soccer this season, having held his place in the Wigan side since the opening day of the season.

MIKE MOORE (Forward) Mike came through the junior set-up at Port Vale to take his place in their senior side last season. Wigan signed him during the early weeks of this season and he has scored four goals for them.

PETER HOUGHTON (Forward). Peter joined Wigan from South Liverpool in 1977 and scored 18 goals for both those clubs in the Northern Premier last season. He has netted eight times this season.

DEREK BROWNBILL (Forward). Derek played in Liverpool's First Division side in 1973/74 but moved on to Port Vale the following season. He made about 100 senior appearances for Vale before signing for Wigan this season.

IAN PURDIE (Forward) Ian began his career with Aberdeen and won Scottish under-23 honours while with them. He moved on to Dundee in 1975 and spent last season with Motherwell. He joined Wigan upon their election to the Football League.

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DIV. 4 TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Reading	30	13	2	0	36	7	4	6	5	17	22	42
Wimbledon	26	11	1	1	26	15	6	5	2	24	16	40
Aldershot	29	10	5	1	27	11	3	7	3	16	17	38
Grimsby	29	11	3	2	39	16	5	2	6	16	15	37
Portsmouth	29	10	3	2	25	8	5	2	7	21	24	35
Wigan	29	10	2	4	25	16	4	4	5	10	12	34
Barnsley	26	6	3	2	26	14	5	7	3	17	12	32
Newport	29	7	4	5	25	23	5	3	5	18	17	31
Stockport	29	10	2	5	27	16	1	5	6	18	25	29
Torquay	29	9	3	4	27	20	3	2	8	12	23	29
Bradford	27	6	3	3	20	14	6	1	8	19	30	28
Bournemouth	29	7	4	5	27	15	2	5	6	7	10	27
Hereford	29	6	6	1	20	12	3	3	10	14	23	27
Hartlepool	27	5	8	2	25	19	3	3	6	10	22	27
Port Vale	28	4	6	4	19	19	5	2	7	21	25	26
Doncaster	30	6	4	6	18	17	4	2	8	18	31	26
Scunthorpe	26	7	1	4	18	17	2	0	6	12	17	25
Huddersfield	27	7	4	2	15	9	1	2	11	10	22	22
Darlington	27	4	5	4	15	13	3	3	8	16	20	22
York	25	4	4	4	13	14	4	2	7	10	20	22
Crews	30	3	5	6	16	23	2	7	7	16	31	22
Northampton	26	6	4	2	22	14	1	3	10	13	31	21
Blackpool	24	2	3	5	7	14	2	4	9	13	26	15
Millwall	27	2	3	6	7	14	1	2	13	12	31	11

Fourth Division Scene

By Tony Pullein

Every team in trouble needs a little bit of luck so Halifax Town will be hoping their good fortunes will continue and that yet another benevolent defender will boost their recent run of success. Three weeks ago Halifax ended a run of 22 League games without a win when Port Vale defender Bill Bentley scored the only goal of the game for them. Last Saturday Portsmouth's Peter Ellis headed into his own net to set them on the way to a shock 2-0 victory.

Defeat at Halifax knocked Pompey out of the top four positions and, unless they can halt their recent slide, their once-bright promotion hopes will soon fade. That was their second defeat in a row and they had only once in seven League outings.

With most of their promotion rivals now in top form, Pompey will have to call upon a super-human effort to get back into the reckoning. Reading, for example, won their fifth game in succession thanks to a Pat Earles goal at York. It was his 17th of the season. That 1-0 success at York kept Reading two points clear at the top but Wimbledon, their closest rivals, had four games in hand.

The Dons had a shock in their home encounter with lowly Huddersfield, though. They went a goal behind just before the interval. Fortunately, John Leslie reacted swiftly after the break to equalise with an angled drive but it was left to substitute Phil Driver to score Wimbledon's winner late in the game.

A few days earlier Wimbledon had equalled their best-ever League victory with an astonishing 6-1 success away to Torquay. Alan Cork, who hadn't scored in the League since early December, scored four of the Dons' goals to take his tally up to 21.

Defeat at Wimbledon left Huddersfield level with the 21st club on points and in danger of having to apply for re-election for the first time in their history. What a terrible humiliation that would be for a club that once won the League Championship three seasons in succession!

Not even Liverpool have ever managed to do that. And it would be difficult to imagine that the Anfield club might one day find itself in a similar position. Yet in football anything is possible as Huddersfield are having the misfortune to prove at the moment.

Aldershot manager Tom McNearney is in the happy position of knowing that,

on the rare occasions when John Dungworth fails to come up with a goal, his striking partner Andy Needham will oblige. It happened in the Shots' home match with Hereford when Needham popped up with both goals in a 2-0 success.

Dungworth had scored in Aldershot's previous seven games but was kept quiet by the Hereford defence. They couldn't cope with the dual threat of Needham who quietly made sure of two more valuable points. Aldershot are under pressure to sell Dungworth, and net a big fee, but they seem certain to keep him at least until promotion is assured.

Aldershot have a thriving commercial unit and are not pressed for money so they are one of only a handful of Fourth Division clubs in the happy position of being able to decline tempting offers for their best players. In the end the player's ambition may deterine that he will move to a bigger club and, if Dungworth's goals do in fact take them back into the Third Division, then the club may express their thanks by giving him the chance to improve himself.

Wigan Athletic kept in the promotion hunt when they drew 1-1 at home to Barnsley. The League's newcomers would have had both points but for a penalty goal from former England striker Allan Clarke, now

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DIVISION FOUR CROWDS CHART

Up to and including last Saturday — League games only.

	Aggregate	Average
1. Portsmouth (1) ...	166,197	11,080
2. Barnsley (2) ...	111,785	10,162
3. Wigan Athletic (3) ...	107,581	6,724
4. Reading (4) ...	92,813	6,188
5. Grimsby (7) ...	77,787	4,862
6. Bradford City (6) ...	58,201	4,850
7. Stockport (5) ...	74,638	4,665
8. Bournemouth (9) ...	63,427	3,964
9. Aldershot (8) ...	63,178	3,949
10. Newport (10) ...	60,827	3,802
11. Wimbledon (11) ...	48,778	3,752
12. Huddersfield (13) ...	47,385	3,645
13. Hereford (12) ...	47,238	3,634
14. NORTHAMPTON (16) ...	42,293	3,524
15. Port Vale (15) ...	48,969	3,498
16. Scunthorpe (17) ...	41,817	3,485
17. Hartlepool (14) ...	51,164	3,411
18. Doncaster (19) ...	49,392	3,293
19. York City (18) ...	38,899	3,242
20. Torquay (20) ...	44,799	2,800
21. Crewe (21) ...	29,272	2,091
22. Darlington (22) ...	25,339	1,949
23. Halifax (23) ...	17,989	1,635
24. Rochdale (24) ...	15,649	1,565

Figures in brackets denote position in last chart.

LEADING SCORERS

Up to and including last Saturday

	Lge	LC	FAC	Total
Dungworth (Aldershot)	17	—	8	25
Cork (Wimbledon)	18	1	2	21
Bradd (Stockport)	14	1	2	17
Earles (Reading)	13	4	—	17
Goddard (Newport)	13	—	3	16
Hemmerman (Portsmouth)	14	—	2	16
Lee (Stockport)	12	2	2	16
Reilly (Northampton)	8	4	—	14
Lawrence (Torquay)	11	1	1	13
Bell (Barnsley) (Includes 3 for Halifax)	11	—	1	12
Clarke (Barnsley)	10	—	2	12
Coyne (Crewe)	10	1	1	12
Kilmore (Scunthorpe)	12	—	—	12
Leslie (Wimbledon)	12	—	—	12
Wright (Port Vale)	11	1	—	12

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- 2 Tony GEIDMINTIS
- 3 Peter MEAD
- 4 Paul SAUNDERS
- 5 Stuart ROBERTSON
- 6 Steve BRYANT
- 7 John FARRINGTON
- 8 Keith WILLIAMS
- 9 John FROGGATT
- 10 George REILLY
- 11 Jim McCAFFREY
- 12 Kim WASSELL

WIGAN

- 1 John BROWN
- 2 Kevin SMART
- 3 Joe HINNIGAN
- 4 Tommy GORE
- 5 Noel WARD
- 6 Dave FRETWELL
- 7 Frank CORRIGAN
- 8 Jeff WRIGHT
- 9 Derek BROWNBILL
- 10 Mike MOORE
- 11 Ian PURDIE
- 12 Alan CROMPTON



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Man in The Middle

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Referee:

D. V. Reeves
(Uxbridge)

Linesmen:

J. Ball (Leicester)
(Red Flag)

D. H. Holland (Watford)
(Yellow Flag)

Final Score

Northampton	
Opponents	
Goalscorers — Northampton	
Goalscorers — Opponents	

Next 4

March 13 Port Vale

March 24 Torquay

March 31 Rochdale

April 3 York

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